



State of California
Respiratory Care Board
444 North 3rd Street, Suite 270
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone (916) 323-9983
Fax (916) 323-9999
www.rcb.ca.gov



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Inquiry: In many hospitals, there has been an increase in the practice of Respiratory Therapist performing multiple treatments on different patients at the same time. It is my understanding this is not an acceptable practice as this unsafe for the patient. I am requesting an opinion from the Board on the practice of Respiratory Care Practitioners performing treatments on more than one patient at the same time.

Response: The mandate of the Respiratory Care Board is to protect and serve the consumer by administering and enforcing the Respiratory Care Practice Act and its regulations in the interest of the safe practice of respiratory care. We can only do that as unsafe practices are reported to the Board.

The Board has adopted the AARC Clinical Practice Guidelines as its reference to determining what is safe and what would be considered unsafe. We would recommend that organizations use this document to develop appropriate policies and procedures for administration of respiratory care services within their facility.

As a Board, we would strongly discourage any organization from adopting a policy which leaves patients unattended for administration of medication. This practice would make it impossible to monitor patient reaction (particularly adverse) and or benefits the patient may receive from the medication and treatment.

In addition, unattended therapy may be considered self administered therapy and not qualify as billable. We would recommend therefore, that you contact Medicare directly. Their contact information is listed below for your reference.

Toll Free Telephone: 1-800-MEDICARE (633-4227)
Website: www.medicare.com

Reference # 2003-C-29